



# Corporate Liability from Below: Struggles for Rights, Justice and Responsibility in the Context of Transnational Mining Projects in Peru

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## Project overview

This dissertation project addresses the legal responsibility of corporate and state actors for human rights violations committed in the context of two transnational mining projects in Peru. From a social anthropological point of view, it examines how different actors use and mobilise national legislation as an instrument to legitimize their claims for rights and justice. The project analyses local as well as transnational court cases that have arisen from protests against two mining projects in the regions of Cajamarca and Piura.

I am particularly interested in how the legal mobilisation against transnational corporations affects social movements on the ground. The negotiation processes between these local social movements, on the one hand, and national as well as international human rights organisations, on the other hand, are of special interest to this research. In addition, the project analyses local court cases in which state and corporate actors mobilise national legislation to criminalize social protests and to slow down political mobilization against major investment projects.

## Theoretical Framework

The project combines the discussion on transnational corporate liability with the legal anthropological debate on the "juridification" of social protests. It sheds light on the consequences the juridification of social conflicts on the ground has. In this sense, it takes up the social anthropological debate as to whether law can be seen as an emancipatory tool or a so-called "weapon of the weak" or whether it is rather an instrument of political and economic elites to prevent social change. The project shows how, in practice, such different expectations of how law and legal processes work, or should work, come to interact. It enquires into what the consequences of such interactions are.

## Methodology

The project is based on several months of ethnographic field research and participatory observation in the region of Cajamarca and in Peru's capital Lima, where I accompanied activists from local social movements and human rights lawyers working for national and international NGOs.

